

abbey.¹ Word was sent through the disturbed districts that no one on pain of death was to do custom or service to his lord, without further orders from the 'Great Society.'² The scheme of final settlement put forward, was that of commuting all old dues and services for a rent of fourpence an acre.³ Although there is no reason to suppose that every rebel knew of and consented to this scheme, it was the demand of their representatives in London, and there is no other proposal of which any record has come down to us. There is no evidence of any desire to take the land from the lords and establish peasant proprietorship.

For the rest, the peasants sought to create among the upper classes a wholesome respect for the * majesty of the people.' The outbreak was certainly calculated to do this; the murder of those specially connected with the Statute of Labourers was a protest and a threat.

But, besides the social ends, there were distinct political objects in view. The rebels rose to protest against the bad government of many years,⁴ for which they regarded John of Gaunt as specially responsible. They dealt out summary punishment to any of the King's ministers who came into their hands, but above all were they incensed with the Duke. This animosity against him was universal in this June, and equally universal was the loyalty to young Richard. The two feelings naturally went together, for suspicion of the Duke's designs against his nephew, though publicly denied by the Parliament of 1377, had never been quite set at rest. The boy King, who could not be held responsible for any act that had hitherto been done in his name, became the idol, and his wicked uncle the bugbear, of the populace. They imagined that, if they could get Richard into their hands, they could make him do what they wished; and they no doubt fancied that the generous youth would sympathise with his subjects' aspirations for liberty.⁵ How far the leaders had definite designs with regard to the settlement of the administration is a question that will arise in connection with theii

¹ Wals., i. 473 and 482. * Powell, 49; *Kent Arch.*, iii. 71-

* 2. *Calendar of Pat. Bolls*, 27; *Mon. Eve.*, 28; *H. B.*, 517.
* Froiss., ii. 465; JET. JJ., 512. * See Ap.